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ABSTRACT

This manual delineates procedures for the mandatory verification of 3 percent of the applications for national school food programs. Two methods of selection are described: random and "error prone profiling." The latter involves selecting for verification those applicants whose recorded monthly income is closest to the eligibility cutoff and/or who are not receiving food stamps. (Such applications are four times more likely to contain an error than those selected at random). Other topics include guidelines for notification of selection, collateral contacts, reduction or termination of benefits, detailed verification procedures, and assorted questions and answers for administrative guidance, covering a wide range of contingencies. The appendix includes sample letters, notifications, and documentation forms. (TE)

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Administrative Guidance for Verification of National School Lunch, Breakfast and Special Milk Applications

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SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

General Information About Selection of Applications

School Food Authorities may develop their own procedures to select the applications they intend to verify. However, the selection of applications must not involve discrimination against anyone on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or handicap.

It is desirable to select applicants with a high likelihood of misreporting since this allows School Food Authorities to make the best use of limited resources. Two selection procedures are presented in this guidance: error-prone profiling and random sampling.

Error-prone profiling is nondiscriminatory (the error prone characteristics are statistically determined without considering race, sex, color, national origin, or handicap). It greatly increases the likelihood of verifying applications that have misreported income information. In fact, in the pilot study, it has been shown that applications selected by error-prone profiles rather than by random sampling are four times more likely to contain an error which, if not corrected, would result in ineligible households receiving program benefits. It is easy to use and does not require sophisticated knowledge or computers and helps to reduce the number of eligible persons who are asked to undergo verification. It is, in short, well suited for use by school officials.

Random sampling is also nondiscriminatory. However, it does not enable School Food Authorities to verify applications with a high likelihood of having erroneous income information.

ERROR-PRONE PROFILING

Error-prone profiling is a method for selecting approved applications having a high likelihood of error. The method presented here is similar to methods used by IRS, Social Security, AFDC, and Food Stamps to select individuals for verification. The actual error-prone profile was developed by the pilot study and only requires information that is on the application. No additional information is needed to select approved applications for verification.

Scoring Method

The scoring method only requires that the verifying official score the application on the basis of three questions and then add together the scores for each question. All applications start with a score of 0. Question 1: An application is given one point if the total monthly income is within $120 of the free or reduced price eligibility cutoff. Question 2: Another point is added if the reported total monthly income is within $60 of the free or reduced price eligibility cutoff. Question 3: Finally, a point is added if the applicant does not report receiving food stamps. The resulting score has a value ranging from 0 to 3. Highly error-prone applications will have a score of 3 while applications that are not error-prone will have a score of 0. Once applications are scored, those with the highest scores are verified.

Error-prone profile selection is designed to identify those applications with a high likelihood of error. It is not designed to select only 3 percent or 3,000 applications for verification. Thus it is possible to select a greater or fewer number of applications than is required. If this occurs, it may be desirable to add or subtract approved applications.

RANDOM SELECTION

Random sampling does not permit a School Food Authority to direct its verification efforts toward those applications with the greatest likelihood of error. Applicants who have accurately completed the applicaton and are truly eligible are just as likely to have their applications verified as persons who misreport and are ineligible.

To randomly select applications for verification, these steps should be followed:

. Count the total number of approved applications on file as of October 31 (or use the estimated number if verification will take place prior to October 31)

  . If the total number of approved applications is less than 100,000:

    - Choose a number at random between 1 and 33.

    - Then, begin counting the applications until the number chosen at random is reached. Select this application for verification.

    - Then, count and select every 33rd application until the required number of applications have been selected.

  . If the total number of approved applications is more than 100,000:

    - Divide the total number of approved applications on file as of October 31 by 3,000. Then round the result down to the nearest whole number. This whole number is the "skip interval" that will be used.

    - Then, choose a number at random between 1 and the skip interval.

    - Then, begin counting the applications until the number chosen at random is reached. Select this application for verification.

    - Then, count and select every application using the skip interval. Continue this until the required number of applications have been selected.

NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION

Households selected for verification must be notified. It is recommended that notification be done in writing and School Food Authorities establish and include in the letter a specified period of time, such as 10 calendar days from the date of the notification letter, by which the household must provide information.

The notification letter must state:

1. The household has been selected for verification;

2. the types of acceptable information that can be provided to confirm income;

3. proof of current food stamp eligibility may be provided instead of income information;

4. information must be provided, and failure to do so will result in termination of benefits; and

5. the name and telephone number of a school official who can answer questions and provide assistance.

Benefits must be terminated if the household is unable to confirm its current eligibility or refuses to cooperate in verification efforts.

Copies of original documents submitted by the household should be returned. The school official may wish to attach copies of the documents to the application file or note the source, date, and relevant content of the documents on the application file.

Collateral Contacts

If written information cannot be obtained or if supplying such information would be a hardship on the household, the School Food Authority may wish to use a collateral contact or a combination of collateral contact and a school conference.

Collateral contact is a verbal confirmation of a household's income by a person outside of the household who is knowledgeable about the income of the household. The contact should be mutually agreed upon by the household and the school official. No contact can be made without first notifying the household and obtaining their permission. Collateral contacts could include employers, social service agencies, migrant agencies, religious or civic organizations. In most cases employers will not release income information over the phone without a release from the employee. However, they may be able to inform the school official that an employee is laid off which may be enough to confirm eligibility. The same is true of other contacts. While they will rarely know exact income information, they may have sufficient information to indicate that indeed the household's income is within the range for eligibility for free or reduced price meals. For example, a social service agency may be able to inform the school that the household is on welfare and that the eligibility for welfare benefits are well within the income range for free meals.

Agency Records

USDA regulations allow confirmation of a household's income through the use of information maintained by otner government agencies to which the State Agency, School Food Authority or school has legal access. The use of agency records provides the only means by which unreported income can be obtained.

One possible source could be wage and benefit information maintained by the State employment agency, if that information is available to the verifying official. Such records are State records and the release of information maintained by State employment officers are governed by State law.

Another possible source are the food stamp agency records maintained on food stamp recipients. Food stamp legislation has been changed to allow food stamp offices to release information from their files to other Federal assistance programs and federally assisted State programs.

Food Stamp Households

Beginning School Year 1983-84, the income guidelines for food stamp eligiblity will be the same as the eligibilty guidelines for a free lunch in the National School Lunch Program. By USDA regulations, a household selected for verification must be given the opportunity to document its participation in the Food Stamp Program in lieu of any other documentation of income. Once proof of current participation in the Food Stamp Program has been established, no further verification of that household's income may be pursued.

There are two methods that can be used to determine whether a household is currently receiving food stamps:

1. Household Documentation of Participation

   A school can place the responsibility on the household by requesting that they provide a document from the food stamp office. Every time a household is approved for food stamps they are furnished with a written letter of determination or notice of eligibilty. The verifying official should examine the letter of determination, other award letter, or the authorization to participate card or Voucher (the ATP card) to make sure that the household is currently participating in the Food Stamp Program. The notice of eligibility or the notice of continued benefits is preferred for verification purposes, since families only have the ATP card once during the month before exchanging it for food stamps. A food stamp document that does not give the dates of the certification period is not adequate for verification. A household which does not have satisfactory food stamp documentation may want to request a signed, dated letter from the food stamp office certifying that their eligiblity is current. This is also acceptable for verification purposes.

2. Local Food Stamp Office Verification of Participation

The second method of verifying participation in the Food Stamp Program is direct contact between the School and the Food Stamp Office. Food Stamp Offices are permitted by law to allow that program to release information from their files to other Federal assistance programs and federally assisted State programs. Regardless of how School Food Authorities verify food stamp participation, contact should be made with the local food stamp office to discuss the kinds of forms used in their area and the methods by which verification requests should be handled.

REDUCTION OR TERMINATION OF BENEFITS

If the School Food Authorities' verification efforts fail to confirm current eligibility for free or reduced price benefits, or if the household fails to cooperate with these verification efforts, benefits must be reduced or terminated, as appropriate.

Ten calendar days advance notification must be provided to households that are to receive a reduction or termination of free or reduced price benefits. The first day of the 10 calendar day advance notice period must be the day the notice is sent to the household.

The notice must advise the household of the following:

Change in benefits;
Reasons for the change;
The right of appeal;
When the appeal must be filed to ensure continued benefits while awaiting a hearing and decision;
That the household may reapply for benefits at any time during the school year.

Households who appeal reduction or termination of benefits within the 10 calendar day advance notice period must continue to receive benefits until the decision of the hearing official is made. The hearing procedure contained in the School Food Authority's approved free and reduced price policy statement must be followed. If verification results in a change in eligibility status for one child in a household, the change must be extended to all children in that household. School Food Authority claims for reimbursement submitted to the State Agency shall reflect any change in eligibility status beginning with the date of the change.

Verification

For many years the verification of free and reduced price applications was allowed only where there was good reason or cause to believe that the information on an application was incorrect. When allegations of widespread abuse of this system were made, there was increasing pressure for tighter controls. Congress responded to these concerns by the enactment of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981. This legislation requires Sponsors to verify applications beginning with the 1983-84 school year.

The verification of information cannot be required during the initial application for Program benefits. Verification can only be completed after the approval of an application. School officials are required to verify a minimum of 3% or 3,000 (whichever is less) of the total approved applications on file in each school as of October 31.

The following describes recommended step-by-step instructions for verifying current eligibility through the use of written evidence:

I. Send letter to household requesting either: (1) written evidence of all current incomes or, (2) written evidence proving current participation in the Food Stamp Program.

   A. If the household submits written evidence of current incomes, the official reviews the written evidence to determine whether or not it is sufficient to determine total current income.

      1. If the official determines that written evidence is sufficient to determine total current income, calculate current income based on written evidence.

         a. If written evidence confirms eligibility determination previously made, VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT MET.

         b. If written evidence does not confirm eligibility determination previously made, notify the household of change of benefits, VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT MET.

      2. If the official determines that written evidence is not sufficient to determine total current income, contact the household and ask for either: (1) missing written evidence of current incomes or, (2) written evidence of current food stamp participation.

         a. If household submits sufficient written evidence to confirm eligibility determination previously made, VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT MET.

         b. If household submits sufficient written evidence but evidence does not confirm eligibility determination previously made, notify the household of change in benefits, VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT MET.

c. If household still does not submit sufficient written evidence, send letter to household explaining that benefits will be terminated, VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT MET.

or

Try collateral contacts to obtain missing information.

B. If the household submits written evidence of current food stamp participation, the official reviews the written evidence to determine whether or not it is sufficient to determine current food stamp participation.

1. If official determines that written evidence is sufficient to prove current food stamp participation, the household is determined to be eligible for free meal benefits.

a. If the household was previously determined eligible for free meal benefits, VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT MET.

b. If the household was previously determined eligible for reduced price meal benefits, notify household of change in benefits, VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT MET.

2. If the official determines that written evidence is not sufficient to prove current food stamp participation, contact the household and ask for either: (1) written evidence of current food stamp participation or, (2) written evidence of all current incomes.

a. If household submits sufficient written evidence to support eligibility determination previously made, VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT MET.

b. If household submits sufficient written evidence but evidence does not support eligibility determination previously made, notify the household of change in benefits, VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT MET.

c. If household still does not submit sufficient written evidence, send letter to household explaining that benefits will be terminated, VERIFICATION REQUIREMENT MET.

or

Try collateral contacts to obtain missing information.

ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDANCE

Timeframes

1. Q: When must verification be implemented and completed?

   A: School Food Authorities must implement minimum verification standards begining in School Year 1983-84. Each school year verification efforts must be completed no later than five months from the first day of school.

Number of Applications to Review

2. Q: How many applications must a School Food Authority verify?

   A: At a minimum, 3% or 3,000, whichever is less, of all approved applications on file as of October 31.

3. Q: In determining the number of approved applications on file as of October 31, how is a single application which lists five children for whom applications is made counted--as one application or five applications?

   A: Regulations require verification of approved free and reduced price applications. Therefore, a single application with five children for whom application is made would be considered as one application in determining the total number of applications on file as of October 31. In cases where one household submits a separate application for each child, the School Food Authority should make every effort to ensure that the household undergoes verification only once.

Applicable Programs

4. Q: Do the verification requirements apply to the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, Special Milk, and Commodity School Programs?

   A: Yes. They apply to all the School Nutrition Programs.

Exceptions

5. Q: Are there any situations where the verification requirements are excepted?

   A: Verification efforts are not required in residential child care institutions and schools with no separately identifiable charge for meals and no special cash assistance is claimed. In the majority of these excepted schools, applications are not required to be secured or maintained and children are considered a family of one with no income. Therefore, verification efforts in such schools are unnecessary.

Families That Do Not Apply

6. Q: Does the verification requirement preclude a school official from completing an application for a child known to be needy?

   A: No. School officials may still complete an application and determine a child eligible for benefits based on the information available. Such an application should not be considered for verification.

Requesting Additional Information

7. Q: Can additional information other than the four basic documentation items be requested on the application?

   A: Additional information may be requested on the application but is not to be used to establish eligibility. The regulations require that prior to any verification, a complete application must be approved if the four basic documentation factors indicate eligibility. These factors are:

   1) names of all household members;

   2) social security numbers of all adult household members, or an indication that an adult has no social security number;

   3) total household income; and

   4) signature of an adult household member.

Month Used for Verification of Income

8. Q: If the information provided on the application reflects income received in August, must I verify that month's income?

   A: Only if that is the most current full month at the time of verification. The month chosen for confirmation of income information would depend primarily on when the school year verification efforts take place and/or on the source used for obtaining income information. For example, if free and reduced price applications are filled out in August, but the School Food Authority does not verify information until mid-November, income information for October should be requested.

9. Q: When should the verification sample be selected and verification take place?

   A: It is recommended that both take place after certification is complete.

10. Q: Are there required criteria for selection of the applications to be verified?

A: No. The verifying official may determine the method of sample selection to be used. Possible methods include the verification of all applications, random sample selection and error-prone profiling. Other methods may also be used. However, any method chosen must not involve discrimination against anyone on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or handicap.

11. Q: The error-prone profiling method is claimed to be the most cost-effective. How do we know this?

A: The verification pilot study is examining methods of preventing and detecting the misreporting of income. The following profile was developed from pilot study data. As the profile shows, the higher the score the more likely an application is to contain erroneous information, resulting in excess benefits. For example, the data shows 6% of the approved applications scored a "3" after the three questions were answered for each application. Seventy-one percent of the applications which scored "3" were receiving excess benefits for which the household was not entitled.

Error-Prone Score	% of Applications Receiving Excess Benefits	% of Total Applications
0	2	45
1	20	42
2	40	7
3	71	6

Food Stamp Households

12. Q: If a household participating in the Food Stamp Program is selected for verification, what verification efforts should be undertaken?

A: Although the error-prone profile indicates households receiving Food Stamps are much less likely to be receiving excess benefits, some School Food Authorities may choose a sampling method where Food Stamp households are selected. If so, these households must be informed that if they are currently participating in the Food Stamp Program, they may submit proof of current eligibility for food stamp benefits instead of any other income information. If the household submits such eligibility information, verification must be limited to a review to determine that the period of eligibility for Food Stamp benefits is current. If the household chooses to provide income information or the Food Stamp certification period has expired, the household is subject to verification of income information.

SOURCES OF INCOME CONFORMATION

Written Evidence

13. Q: What is considered written evidence?

A: Written evidence is viewed as a primary source of verification. Written evidence includes written confirmation of a household's circumstances. For households with employed members, written confirmation of income information includes but is not limited to: paycheck stubs, pay envelopes stating earnings or a letter from the employer stating wages paid. For self-employed persons, income information may include: business or farming documents such as ledger books or a currently self-issued paycheck stub.

Households with unemployed members may provide written confirmation of income through benefit letters from public assistance programs, unemployment benefit notices, a most recent copy of an unemployment check, or worker's compensation notice. Written evidence for other types of income include court decrees or a most recent copy of a check for alimony or child support, and disability or Veterans Administration benefit letters. Households must be allowed to submit evidence of participation in the Food Stamp Program instead of other income information.

14. Q: What items must appear on the documents submitted to confirm income?

A: There are no prescribed items which must appear. The adequacy of the documents submitted to support the household's eligibility level must be judged by the verifying official. It is suggested that to verify income information, written evidence contain at least the name of the household member, income received, the frequency it is received, and the date.

15. Q: What is meant by "agency records?"

A: This is another way for School Food Authorities to obtain household income information. One source of agency records is the State employment offices which maintain information on wage income. Other income information can be obtained through government agencies which make payments to participants in their programs. If these agencies are able to cooperate with you, you may use their records as another source of verification. Households must be given the opportunity to provide more recent information than what you have obtained from another agency's records.

Refusal to Cooperate

16. Q: What do I do if a household refuses to submit verification information?

A: Households who refuse to cooperate with verification efforts are subject to termination of benefits. School officials, however, are encouraged to give applicants every opportunity to provide more recent information than what you have obtained from another agency's records.

17. Q: If a household fails to respond or refuses to cooperate, and I terminate its eligibility, must I select a replacement application to meet the 3,000 or 3% minimum requirement.?

A: No, even though verified applications result in termination, they do count toward the 3,000 or 3% minimum requirement.

Termination or Reduction of Benefits

18. Q: If verification efforts demonstrate that a household is not eligible for free or reduced price benefits, when are these benefits discontinued?

A: A household must be given 10-day advance notice of forthcoming loss or reduction of benefits. The 10-day period begins on the date the notice is sent and families must be clearly informed of the timeframe for appeal.

Appeal

19. Q: If household disagrees with the verification findings, what must they do?

A: When a household disagrees with the school's decision to reduce or terminate its benefits, the household may appeal the adverse action. Households continue to receive benefits if they appeal the adverse action within the 10-days advance notice period.

Appeal Beyond Hearing Official

20. Q: If the hearing official upholds the verification findings that the household is not eligible for benefits, but the household still disagrees, is there any recourse for the household?

A: The State Agency or School Food Authority may, at its discretion, establish an appeal procedure beyond the hearing official. However, the decision of the hearing official shall be binding pending any higher level review.

Recordkeeping

21. Q: What are the recordkeeping requirements?

A: Program regulations require a description of the verification efforts be maintained at the School Food Authority level. The description must only include: (1) a summary of the verification efforts; (2) the total number of applications on file by October 31; and (3) the percentage or number of applications verified. Records must be maintained for three years following the close of the fiscal year.

Privacy Rights

22. Q: How do I ensure that the verification methods selected, conform to privacy rights legislation?

A: School Food Authorities are urged to obtain approval of verification methods, if using any method other than requesting applicants to submit written documentation, by State or local legal counsel to ensure conformity with applicable State and local laws since these laws vary from State to State and from locality to locality.

SPECIFIC SITUATIONS

Change in Benefits

23. Q: If a household was previously determined eligible for reduced price meals but subsequent verification efforts indicate the household is eligible for free, what action must I take?

A: The household should be notified of the change in benefits and free meal benefits extended to all children in the household.

Zero Income

24. Q: How do I verify households that report zero income?

A: Households may be requested to submit a written statement of how the household provides food, housing, clothing, etc., with no income or, if that fails, a collateral contact could be requested to confirm the household's circumstances.

Foster Children

25. Q: What written evidence can be requested for foster children?

A: Foster children are wards of a court or welfare agency placed in residence in a private household and are considered a household of one for purposes of determining eligibility. Only the funds received from a welfare agency which can be identified as personal use funds and money received in hand from any source (trust accounts, etc.) can be considered as income for purposes of determining eligibility. Written evidence of this income could include a letter from the welfare agency stating the amount and frequency of the personal use funds received by the child or a statement from the institution or source dispersing the in-hand funds.

Alimony/Child Support

26. Q: Is a court order which specifies the amount of alimony or child support received adequate confirmation?

A: Yes. However, a copy of the check would be better since that is the amount actually received. If the household understands this and still wants to use the court order of what has been ordered to be paid versus what is actually paid, it should be accepted.

Self-Employed

27. Q: If applicants are self-employed, can they use their last year's tax return as written evidence on how they determined their projected income?

A: Yes. If all responsible alternatives are exhausted, last year's tax return may be used as written evidence for projected income. The use of tax return information by the household is voluntary.

28. Q: In instances of agricluture-related income, if an applicant is just beginning to sell his/her crops or products, what written evidence could be requested?

A: Last year's records can be used as an estimate of the current year's income.

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SCHOOL OFFICIAL'S RESPONSIBILITY

SCHOOL OFFICIALS MUST:	SELECTION PROCESS	RECORDKEEPING	TYPES OF ACCEPTABLE INFORMATION	OTHER METHODS
Verify 3% or 3,000 applications, whichever is less Verify only those applications on file as of October 31 Meet the minimum requirements within 5 months of the beginning of the school year Notify household of the selection	Error-Prone profiling - Applications selected which have a high probability of containing errors Random Selection School officials may develop their own procedures to select the applications they intend to verify. However, the selection of applications must not involve discrimination on the the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex, or handicap.	A summary of the verification efforts Total number of applications on file October 31 The percentage or number of applications verified Selection Process How applications were verified The dates notices were sent Notes on any contacts made The results of the verification The reason for any denial or change of eligibility Signature of the verifying official confirming records are accurate.	Proof of current food stamp eligibility For households with employed members .Paycheck stubs .Pay envelopes stating earnings .Letter from employer stating wages paid For self-employed persons .Business or farming documents i.e. ledger books, self-issued paycheck stub For unemployed persons .Benefit letters from public assistance programs .Court decrees .Copy of check for alimony or child support .Disability or Veterans Administration benefit letter No Income - Zero Income . If applicant has no income, applicant must submit a brief note explaining how food, clothing and housing is provided for the household. Households must be allowed to submit evidence of participation in the Food Stamp Program instead of other income information.	Other Methods - used when written evidence is insufficient .Collateral Contact Verbal confirmation of household's circumstances reported by person outside of household. Household must be notified if this method is used. The source must be selected or approved by the household. .School Conference to obtain written information.

SAMPLE LETTER TO HOUSEHOLDS REQUESTING INCOME DOCUMENTATION

AFTER APPLICATION HAS BEEN APPROVED

Dear _____:

Beginning this school year, we are required to make sure that only eligible children receive free or reduced price meal benefits. Therefore, a sample of applications for free and reduced price benefits has been selected to be verified. Selected households have to show information and/or documents which prove they are eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits. Your household's application was chosen to be verified. You must, therefore, send or bring to the school information or documents which prove your household's income.

The enclosed sheet shows the kinds of information or documents that you may use to prove your household's income.

If you get food stamps, you only have to give us information and/or documents that prove you are participating in the Food Stamp Program. This information must show that you are currently getting food stamps. You may use your Food Stamp Certification Notice, a letter from the food stamp office saying that you receive food stamps, an ATP card, or any other document that will prove that you receive food stamps.

If you give us original documents, we will send them back to you.

Please send or bring this information to the school by _____. If you have any questions, or if you need any help, please call _____ telephone number _____.

If you do not give us information that proves your children are eligible to receive meal benefits, the benefits they receive will be stopped.

Sincerely,

Enclosure

DLJ 1775p

(SAMPLE FORM TO ASSIST HOUSEHOLDS IN DETERMINING APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION)

VERIFICATION INFORMATION

Provide information or documents which show your household's current income. Examples of types of documents are listed below. You may also provide a letter(s) from your income source(s) stating the amount of income you receive.

FOOD STAMP HOUSEHOLDS: If you receive food stamps, you need only provide information which shows your household's participation in this program. No other income information is required. This information could be:

- Food Stamp Certification Notice
- Letter from the food stamp office stating that you receive food stamps
- ATP Card

EARNINGS/WAGES/SALARY:

- Current paycheck stub
- Current pay envelope
- Letter from employer stating gross wages paid and how often they are paid

SOCIAL SECURITY/PENSIONS/RETIREMENT:

- Social Security retirement benefit letter
- Statement of benefits received
- Pension award notice

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION:

- Notice of eligibility from State Security Office

WELFARE PAYMENTS (AFDC, ADC, GA):

- Benefit letter from welfare agency

CHILD SUPPORT/ALIMONY:

- Court decree, agreement or copies of checks received

ALL OTHER INCOME: If you have other forms of income, provide information or documents which show the amount of income received, how often it is received and the date received. For example:

SELF-EMPLOYMENT INCOME:

-Business or farming documents, such as ledger books.
-Self-issued paycheck stub.

DISABILITY OR WORKER'S COMPENSATION:

-Copy of the disability award letter
-Check stub

NO INCOME: If you have no income, provide a brief note explaining how you provide food, clothing and housing for your household.

If you have any questions, or need help in deciding the kind of information to provide, please call _____ telephone number_____.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE FOOD STAMP OFFICE FROM THE SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY

(NOTE: Form can be used for requesting information for more than one applicant.)

Date:_____

Dear_____:

Beginning this school year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued regulations to help ensure that only eligible children receive free and reduced price meal benefits. To comply with these regulations, a percentage of applications for free and reduced price benefits must be selected for verification of the household's income listed on the application. Enclosed is a listing of approved applicants who have been selected for verification and who have indicated that they currently receive food stamp benefits. On the enclosed listing, please indicate if these household members are currently participating in the Food Stamp Program. This information will be used only to confirm the approved applicant's eligibility for free or reduced price benefits.

Your prompt return of the listing will be appreciated. A self-addressed return envelope is also enclosed for your convenience. If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact _____ at Telephone Number_____.

_____
Signature Date

_____
Address

_____
Telephone Number

Enclosure

VERIFICATION FORM - FOOD STAMP RECIPIENTS
(Multiple Applicants)

ADULT HOUSEHOLD MEMBER (Last Name, First Name)	SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	CURRENT PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STAMP PROGRAM	
		Yes	No

Signature of Food Stamp Official Date

Address

Telephone Number

SAMPLE LETTER HOUSEHOLDS MAY HAVE FOOD STAMP OFFICE COMPLETE

STATEMENT OF FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

This statement is to confirm that _____ is currently
(Name of recipient)

certified to receive food stamp benefits.

_____
Signature of Food Stamp Official

_____
Date

_____
Address

_____
Telephone Number

SAMPLE LETTER HOUSEHOLD MAY HAVE EMPLOYER COMPLETE

STATEMENT OF EARNINGS

This statement is to confirm that _____ earnings
(Name of employee)

before deductions for the month of _____ were $_____.
(Most current full month)

This amount is paid:

____ weekly

____ every two weeks

____ monthly

____ other

_____ _____
(Signature of Employer) (Date)

_____
Address

_____
Telephone Number

SAMPLE LETTER HOUSEHOLD MAY HAVE SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE COMPLETE

STATEMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND/OR SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)

This statement is to confirm that _____
(Name of Claimant)

received the following Social Security or SSI gross income for the month of

_____.
(Most current full month)

Name of Beneficiary	Social Security	SSI
_____	$ _____	$ _____
_____	$ _____	$ _____
_____	$ _____	$ _____

_____
Signature of Official (Date)

_____
Address

_____
Telephone Number

SAMPLE LETTER HOUSEHOLD MAY HAVE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE OFFICE COMPLETE

STATEMENT OF GENERAL ASSISTANCE OR AFDC PAYMENTS

This statement is to confirm that _____
(Name of Recipient)

received the following general assistance and/or AFDC payments for the month of _____.
(Most current full month)

Name of Beneficiary	Public Assistance	AFDC
_____	$ _____	$ _____
_____	$ _____	$ _____
_____	$ _____	$ _____

_____
Signature of Official (Date)

_____
Address

_____
Telephone Number

SAMPLE NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE IN BENEFITS OR
TERMINATION OF FREE OR REDUCED PRICE BENEFITS
(Note: Make changes as applicable for the Special Milk Program)

_____
Date

Dear _____:

As a result of our verification efforts, starting _____
(10 calendar days from the above date)

your eligibility for free or reduced price benefits has been:

_____ Changed from reduce price to free. Beginning on the stated date your children will receive meals at no cost.

_____ Changed from free to reduced price eligibility. The reduced price charge is _____¢. You must tell the school when your household income increases by more than $50 per month ($600 per year) or when your household size decreases.

_____ Terminated for the following reasons:

_____ income is over the allowable amount

_____ did not provide proof of current eligibility. The following information is missing: _____.
_____.

If you are not eligible for benefits now, but have a decrease in household income, become unemployed, or have an increase in household size, you may fill out an application at that time, and reapply for benefits.

If you do not agree with the decision, you may discuss it with _____.
(Verifying Official)

You also have a right to a fair hearing. This can be done by calling or writing the following official by _____.
(Date)

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

If you request a hearing, your child will continue to receive free or reduced price meals until the decision of the hearing official is made.

Sincerely,

Name _____ Title _____

In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age or handicap. If you believe you have been discriminated against, write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

Illinois
State Board of
Education

100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777

Walter W. Naumer, Jr., Chairman
Illinois State Board of Education

Donald G. Gill
State Superintendent of Education

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